UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING,
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Commerce Committee Testimony
From
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Subject: AN ACT CONCERNING INVESTMENT IN CONNECTICUT'S ADVANCED MANUFACTURING BUSINESSES (H.B. No. 5041)

I am testifying today in support of the Advanced Manufacturing Fund as proposed in House Bill No. 5041. As the Dean of the College of Engineering, Technology, and Architecture at the University of Hartford, and in my previous career in industry with Bell Laboratories, I have extensive experience in advanced manufacturing practice. I was the founding Executive Director of Bell Labs Ireland, a new division of Bell Labs focused on product realization and supply chain technologies.

In Connecticut, I have had the opportunity to work with a number of the state's advanced manufacturers, have toured a number of their facilities, and understand the critical role they play in the aerospace supply chain. I have also come to understand the depth of support for advanced manufacturing at Connecticut's independent colleges through my work as chair of the Council of Engineering Deans. This sector provides more than half of the engineering degrees in Connecticut and has close partnerships with dozens of the supply chain companies. In particular, the private universities have specialized in addressing the near term and applied research & development needs of the state's manufacturing base.

The state's institutions of higher education can be an invaluable resource to the Aerospace Supply Chain in Connecticut. Those companies need to ramp up productivity to accommodate the near term surge in orders that is on the way. They need to remain cost competitive with emerging economies that are entering the aerospace market, and they need to rapidly accommodate new technologies such as additive manufacturing, titanium and advanced composites. Most importantly, they need a pipeline of students ready and able to assume key positions in their firms which in general have an aging workforce that will face significant turn-over in the next decade.

We believe that as part of this initiative, there is need for a new center that brings together the higher education institutions of the state and focuses them on near term and applied R&D needs of the aerospace supply chain companies. This center would support these companies with high

impact programs that address their specific needs with extensive new resources from the faculty and students of the member universities. This center would feature effective outreach teams that would visit the companies, learn their needs, and develop programs to address those needs with the university partners. A director and a board would assure that the projects deliver value to the supply chain companies. We envision a high level of interaction on these projects, which would help create a pipeline of students and future employees into the supply chain. We believe this would provide a meaningful and real benefit to these companies. At a time when the proximity of these manufacturers to the prime contractors is no longer the benefit that it was before the global data networks, this center would be a fitting response to the multiple threats that face these companies. The support would go beyond manufacturing and engineering and could include other support programs such as business case analysis, global marketing, operations research and inventory control, and human resource development.

The Advanced Manufacturing Fund is an enlightened initiative to secure the health of the aerospace supply chain in Connecticut. We enthusiastically support House Bill No. 5041, and we welcome consideration of a new center that would strategically use a portion of this fund to bring new resources and a new model of interaction to support this critical component of the Connecticut economy and American leadership in the aerospace industry.

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